



City of New Bedford
Scott W. Lang, Mayor

City of New Bedford
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P R E S S R E L E A S E

City Issues Update on Cleaning of New Bedford High School Ventilation System and Testing Conducted at Keith Middle School

New Bedford, Massachusetts- The cleaning of the air handling system at New Bedford High School was completed during the last week of August, 2007. Throughout the project, TRC, the City's independent consultant collected samples by wiping interior surfaces of the clean air handling system. Results of the wipe samples demonstrate that the project was extremely effective in significantly reducing PCB-impacted dust in the system. The overwhelming majority of the samples showed no presence of PCBs, and PCBs were below actionable level in all samples collected.

Further, as a result of the vent cleaning it was learned that a number of roof ventilation fans and classroom unit ventilators were not functioning at the highest efficiency levels and in some cases not at all. The School Department is repairing or replacing all malfunctioning fans and vents so that adequate air exchange can be maintained, further improving the indoor air quality at the high school.

Additional indoor air tests conducted after the vent cleanup revealed PCBs are still present in air in the high school building. Concentrations exceeded 0.3 micrograms per cubic meter (the level determined to potentially pose a long term risk) in 3 of the classrooms sampled (blue house classrooms 110 and 212/213 and B-240).

"I've been assured that the level of PCBs do not pose an immediate health risk to students, staff or visitors. However, as a precaution, these three classrooms remain closed and will not be reopened until PCB concentrations are below 0.3 micrograms per cubic meter," said Mayor Scott W. Lang.

The next steps will be to complete repairs to the air handling system to ensure maximum air exchange as well as the introduction of fresh air in an effort to further reduce indoor air concentrations of PCBs. A thorough evaluation of

PCB-containing building materials, such as caulking and adhesive compounds identified in August 2006 will be conducted throughout the school to develop a plan to abate these materials. Follow up air quality testing will be conducted upon completion of repairs to the air handling system to determine the effectiveness in reducing indoor air PCB concentrations.

Mayor Scott W. Lang said he has been encouraged by the results of air monitoring at the Keith Middle School. "After one year of regular testing, the PCB air monitoring continues to demonstrate PCB concentrations are undetectable or well below levels requiring further identification of potential sources. I am very encouraged by these results and testing will continue to assure that all students, faculty, staff and visitors have a safe and clean learning environment," he said.

A public meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, September 26, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Keith Middle School to provide an update on the project.

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